



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIRST DEAD BIRD TESTS POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS THIS YEAR ***Sharp-Shinned Hawk Found in Vista***

County Vector Control officials confirmed a dead bird found in Vista has tested positive for West Nile virus, making it the first bird of the year in San Diego County.

"West Nile virus is a continuing threat to county residents," said Gary Erbeck, director of the Department of Environmental Health. "Mosquito prevention remains the key to preventing West Nile virus. By controlling mosquitoes now, we can reduce their populations in the spring and summer."

The recent rains have provided mosquitoes with many breeding locations. Residents should check backyard mosquito breeding sources such as children's toys, old spare tires and wheelbarrows to ensure that water is not collecting in their yards. Dump or remove anything that can hold water. To protect yourself remember the five D's, use DEET, DRESS (wear long sleeves, long pants), DRAIN (standing water), and avoid going outdoors from DUSK to DAWN.

The County's West Nile virus Web site, www.SDFightTheBite.com, has a mosquito prevention checklist that includes the most common backyard mosquito breeding sources. Larger water sources such as horse troughs, decorative fountains, ponds and inoperable swimming pools can be stocked with mosquito-eating fish to control larvae before they hatch into biting adults that can carry disease. These fish are free and available at 14 locations around the county. Check the County's West Nile Web site for distribution locations.

San Diego is the sixth county in California to report West Nile virus activity in 2007. Los Angeles, Imperial, Riverside, Santa Clara and Sonoma counties also reported positive birds, mosquitoes, chickens or horses earlier this year. To date, there have been no human cases of West Nile virus reported this year in California.

For more information on West Nile virus, or to report mosquito breeding sites or dead birds, please call Vector Control at (888) 551-INFO (4636).

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